AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please add the following new heading and new paragraph immediately after the title on page 1 of the present specification, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.78:

Cross Reference to Related Patent Applications

This non-provisional application is a divisional of non-provisional U.S. Patent Application No. 09/962,487 filed September 25, 2001, now allowed, benefit of which is claimed under 35 U.S.C. §120 and which in turn claims benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of U.S. provisional Application No. 60/236,031 filed September 28, 2000, priority benefit of which is also claimed for the present divisional application.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 27 and ending on page 11, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Once obtained, the catalyst precursor is calcined. The calcination may be conducted in an oxidizing atmosphere, but it is also possible to conduct the calcination in a non-oxidizing atmosphere plus

~~+~~, e.g., in an inert atmosphere or in vacuo. The inert atmosphere may be any material which is substantially inert, i.e., does not react or interact with, the catalyst precursor. Suitable examples include, without limitation, nitrogen, argon, xenon, helium or mixtures thereof. Preferably, the inert atmosphere is argon or

nitrogen~~, more preferably argon~~. The inert atmosphere may flow over the surface of the catalyst precursor or may not flow thereover (a static environment). When the inert atmosphere does flow over the surface of the catalyst precursor, the flow rate can vary over a wide range, e.g., at a space velocity of from 1 to 500 hr^{-1}.